



News Release

Iowa Association of School Boards

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATTACHED: Biography Information

IASB Hires Interim Executive Director

Des Moines, IA (May 3, 2010) – The Iowa Association of School Boards’ Board of Directors has hired Dr. Veronica Stalker, a highly respected retired superintendent, as interim executive director. She has agreed to lead the organization from May 1 through December 31, 2010.

“This is a huge step forward for us,” said Harry Heiligenthal, IASB leadership development director who has served as temporary interim director for the past two months. “I was proud to step in to help the organization I care so deeply about, and I’ll continue doing all I can to ensure a smooth transition. It’s critical that our staff, myself included, continue our services to districts to share lessons learned and help keep schools strong. We have hundreds of local school boards in this state who do incredible work, and they also need support and resources.”

When the board became aware of the financial and management issues earlier this year that led to the termination of IASB’s executive director, Maxine Kilcrease, it moved quickly to assemble a leadership transition plan. The IASB board also recognized that it was imperative to identify and hire a long-term interim director who could lead the organization through this period, so that Heiligenthal could return to his work.

The majority of the board interviewed four candidates on April 19. Stalker emerged as the top candidate when board members discussed and ranked their choices. Marcia DeZonia, an IASB board member who also serves on the Gilbert School Board, led the search. DeZonia said the board was impressed with Stalker because she has worked in several different K-12 school districts of all sizes, and has experience navigating challenging situations. “I’ve heard from several trusted people that she has high integrity, excellent work ethic, and has very effective interpersonal skills,” DeZonia said.

“This is a chance for me to take my skill set and experience from 30-plus years in the education field and apply it here,” Stalker said. “IASB is an excellent organization. I feel privileged and am enthusiastic about working with member districts, staff and the board to focus on our core mission, strengthen the financial health of the organization and return the confidence people have always had in IASB.”

The board approved her contract last week during a telephonic meeting. Four members abstained, including board president Russ Wiesley who did so because he has worked with Stalker at Waukee

schools. He has emphasized that he was not part of the subcommittee's work in selecting candidates, but that he does support the rest of the board's decision to hire her, calling her "a strong and vibrant leader." Over the next eight months, Stalker will be paid \$131,212 in salary; she has also requested pay in lieu of health insurance, which will add an additional \$11,646 to her overall salary and benefit package.

Search Process:

Due to the immediate timeline, the IASB board created a subcommittee of three people to identify candidates. The subcommittee consisted of George Wheeler, a new board member elected in January from the Ft. Madison school district who represents southeast Iowa schools; Jim Green of the Cedar Rapids Grant Wood AEA board, who represents area education agencies; and DeZonia, of Gilbert, who represents the central region of the state.

They employed criteria established by the board and looked for candidates with:

1. Proven leadership experience, preferably in difficult circumstances/situations
2. Broad-based networking experience in the education community
3. A reputation as a well known and respected leader in Iowa in the education field
4. A clear plan to lead IASB in moving forward
5. Capability and experience to connect with members and re-build relationships
6. Willingness to be a true "interim" who helps lead IASB for several months and then help transition duties to a new executive director in the future.

The subcommittee contacted organizations, such as School Administrators of Iowa, and queried reputable people in the education field for recommendations in the search for ideal candidates; they also heard directly from several people interested in the position. The board also noted that when the time comes to hire a long-term executive director, it will be very deliberate in creating a more extensive process that includes more input from stakeholder groups.

Bio Information:

Please see the attached for a bio of Veronica Stalker.

**IASB is a private, nonprofit organization representing Iowa's 361 school districts,
10 area education agencies and 15 community colleges.**

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